

tournament, including South Shore, and three more teams in the State tournament, including Colonie in the final.

Mr. Speaker, what made the overall performance of the Bronx team even more remarkable was that it has no home field; players used diamonds in both the south and east Bronx, especially at Claremont and Crotona Parks, and a field at the intersection of LaFontaine Avenue and 181st Street.

Again, I congratulate and I wish them the best of luck in their future enterprises. They are our Champions!

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to and congratulating the Rolando Paulino All-Stars Team.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 11, 2000

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following for the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and recommend that all members read and consider it when looking at the issue of Violence Against Women. I hope members find it helpful when considering reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

[From the Washington Post, Sept. 8, 2000]
BATTERED GIRLFRIENDS NEED PROTECTION,
Too

(By Judy Mann)

Barbara Dehl, a 44-year-old mother of four girls, lives a lot of her life in hindsight. Every day, she wonders why she didn't get "Cassie's Law" passed before her 17-year-old daughter, Cassandra, ended up dead—the victim, her mother has testified, of an abusive relationship with a boyfriend.

After Cassie's parents divorced and her mother moved near Boise, Idaho, Cassie chose to remain with her father, Curtis Dehl, in Soda Springs and finish school there. When she was 14, she met Justin Neuendorf, a former altar boy at her church, who was three years older than she was. For the next year, she went out with him off and on.

Her parents didn't realize that their daughter was undergoing verbal and mental abuse. In testimony before a state legislative committee, Barbara said she found out later, from Cassie, that Neuendorf would tell her such things as she wasn't pretty enough for

anybody else to love. "Once a wedge had been inserted between Cassie and her family and friends, the physical abuse began," Barbara testified.

In the spring of 1998, Barbara testified, he choked Cassie hard enough to make her bleed from her nose and ears and ruin a white coat. Cassie had been staying with a girlfriend while her father was out of town. About six weeks after the incident, the girlfriend told Cassie's father about it, and he confronted his daughter. Cassie denied it. He intercepted a letter in which Neuendorf said he was "sorry for almost killing you" and explained that he had been on drugs. Curtis intercepted another letter in which the boyfriend mentioned slitting Cassie's throat.

"We gave these letters to the local police, the prosecutor, the probation officer and to his parents," Barbara says in an interview. "Nobody believed a teenage girl living in her parents' home could be abused by her boyfriend. They just said, 'Why doesn't she walk away?' Nobody believed abuse could happen to a young girl who wasn't married to the abuser. . . . He had her so manipulated that in her mind she thought she was in love with this guy, and she was as helpless to leave him as a victim of battered-wife syndrome."

"When she was 16, she said, 'If I was only better, he wouldn't have to hit me.' When I would confront her, she would tell me it was her fault."

It's a 350-mile trip, each way, between Boise and Soda Springs, and Barbara says she drove it weekly, trying to get help for Cassie. "We put Cassie into domestic-abuse counseling twice, but they didn't have training in dealing with young girls and dating violence," Barbara says. "We never allowed him to see Cassie. He'd take her out of school, out of work, out of state."

"Idaho did not have a domestic-violence order to cover girls her age. I filed for one, anyway. We went before the judge, and he said we had all the evidence in the world, but there were no domestic-violence laws to protect Cassie."

On the night of Dec. 3, 1999, Neuendorf picked Cassie up from a girlfriend's house and did not allow her to get her coat, according to Barbara Dehl. It was below zero. "After midnight," Barbara says, "the truck crashed down an embankment. He was not in the truck. She was. We don't know how he got out. He was slightly injured, with a broken wrist."

"The accident was not reported for more than 15 hours," she says. "The fact that she was in the accident and left at the scene was not reported for 18 hours. When the sheriff's

deputy arrived on the scene, she was dead and her body frozen solid. That's how they found my baby."

Neuendorf has been charged with vehicular manslaughter.

"Her sisters and father and I decided we had to make sure no parent ever had to walk in our shoes," Barbara says.

The Idaho legislature started in January. Barbara wrote what became known as "Cassie's Law," which allows judges to issue a domestic-violence protection order for people in an abusive dating relationship. It allows parents to secure this restraint even without a child's help. Barbara quit work, cashed in her retirement and used her savings to lobby the legislature. The bill passed, was signed into law by the governor on April 3 and went into effect July 1.

Barbara Dehl is now helping the National Task force to end Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women lobby for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. The act, passed in 1994, expires in October, and unless Congress reauthorizes it during what remains of this session, the agencies that help victims of domestic violence will be greatly weakened.

Over the past six years, \$1.6 billion has gone to states and communities to train law enforcement officials and counselors on how to deal with domestic violence. "A lot of it is going to police and prosecutors and shelters and community education," says Pat Reuss, chair of the coalition. "It's been a very good bill."

In 1993, women experienced an estimated 1.1 million violent offenses at the hands of an intimate partner, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. By 1998, the estimate had declined 21 percent, to 876,340 offenses, even though women have become more likely to report crimes of domestic violence. And the number of women killed by an intimate partner declined 23 percent between 1993 and 1997.

The Violence Against Women Act is every bit as important as some other political hot topics, such as prescription drug coverage and hate crimes. It is saving lives. The House version covers women in dating relationships; the Senate version does not.

What happened to Cassie Dehl should persuade the Senate to go along with the more inclusive House provisions. If anything, teenage girls are more susceptible to abusive relationships than mature women.

The bills have strong bipartisan support, and they should be passed promptly. They are too important to be caught up in the last-minute rush of election year politics.